

Case No.: AMKOR-015A (S-015A)

SEMICONDUCTOR PACKAGE INCLUDING FLIP CHIP

INVENTOR

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CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application claims priority to Korean Patent Application No. 2000-86246 entitled SEMICONDUCTOR PACKAGE filed December 29, 2000.

STATEMENT RE: FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH/DEVELOPMENT
(Not Applicable)

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates generally to semiconductor packages, and more particularly to a semiconductor package which includes a flip chip and is specifically configured to provide a thinner profile and superior moisture resistance capabilities as compared to flip chip semiconductor packages known in the prior art.

2. Description of the Related Art

[0002] The recent trend in the electronics industry has been toward the fabrication of lighter, thinner, more simplistic and miniaturized semiconductor packages. To achieve these objectives, there has been developed semiconductor packages fabricated through the use of a flip chip bonding method wherein a semiconductor chip is electrically connected to a printed circuit board component

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of the package. In this flip chip bonding method, the semiconductor chip is bonded to predetermined regions of the printed circuit board component through a reflow process subsequent to the orientation of an active surface of the semiconductor chip toward the printed circuit board component. The flip chip bonding method is used as an alternative to a conventional wire bonding method wherein conductive wires are used to facilitate the electrical connection of the input and output pads of a die to a lead frame.

[0003] However, currently known semiconductor packages fabricated using the flip chip bonding method described above possess certain deficiencies which detract from their overall utility. More particularly, since such semiconductor package employs a printed circuit board component which is costly, the manufacturing cost of the entire semiconductor package is itself significantly increased. In this regard, the cost of the printed circuit board component is extremely high due to the complexity of its manufacturing process, with the printed circuit board component accounting for more than sixty percent of the total cost of the semiconductor package employing the same. As indicated above, this high cost of the printed circuit board component results in an increased cost in the semiconductor package.

[0004] Another drawback associated with the printed circuit board component is that the same typically includes a resin layer and a solder mask which each have high water absorptivity. The susceptibility of the resin layer and solder mask to high levels of water absorption causes the semiconductor package to have a low level of resistance to moisture. As a result, the life span of the semiconductor package is drastically shortened when the same is used in regions of high humidity. A further problem pertains to

the conductive balls which are fused to the bottom surface of the printed circuit board component of the semiconductor package. In this regard, the conductive balls are typically thicker than the semiconductor package itself, thus resulting in a significant increase in the overall thickness of the semiconductor package assembly including the conductive balls. The present invention overcomes these and other deficiencies of prior art semiconductor packages fabricated through the use of a flip chip bonding method, as will be discussed in more detail below.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a semiconductor package comprising a lead frame which includes a plurality of leads. Each of the leads defines opposed, generally planar first and second surfaces. Each of the leads is preferably half-etched so as to further define a third surface which is formed between the first and second surfaces thereof. The semiconductor package also includes a semiconductor chip which defines opposed first and second surfaces, and includes a plurality of input/output pads disposed on the first surface thereof. The input/output pads of the semiconductor chip are electrically connected to the second surfaces of respective ones of the leads via a plurality of conductive bumps. Formed on a prescribed region of the second surface of each lead is a bump land to which the corresponding conductive bump is preferably fused. Additionally, preferably applied to the entirety of the second surface of each lead with the exception of that portion or region thereof defining the bump land is a protective layer. In the semiconductor package, the semiconductor chip, the conductive bumps, and the second

and third surfaces of the leads are covered by a hardened encapsulant portion. The first surfaces of the leads are exposed within the encapsulant portion so as to define input/output terminals of the semiconductor package.

[0006] The structural attributes of the present semiconductor package impart thereto the ability to withstand severe environments for prolonged durations of time. In this regard, the structure of the present semiconductor package provides substantial moisture resistance characteristics. In addition, the input/output terminals defined by the exposed first surfaces of the leads can be mounted directly to an external device such as a motherboard, thereby minimizing the thickness of the semiconductor package/motherboard assembly. The configuration of the lead frame used in the manufacture of the present semiconductor package further minimizes the cost associated with the fabrication thereof.

[0007] The present invention is best understood by reference to the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] These, as well as other features of the present invention, will become more apparent upon reference to the drawings wherein:

[0009] Figure 1 is a cross-sectional view of a semiconductor package constructed in accordance with the present invention;

[0010] Figure 2 is a top plan view of the lead frame included in the semiconductor package shown in Figure 1;

[0011] Figure 3A is a side-elevational view of a portion of the lead frame shown in Figure 2; and

[0012] Figure 3B is a top plan view of a portion of the

lead frame shown in Figure 2.

[0013] Common reference numerals are used throughout the drawings and detailed description to indicate like elements.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0014] Referring now to the drawings wherein the showings are for purposes of illustrating a preferred embodiment of the present invention only, and not for purposes of limiting the same, Figure 1 illustrates in cross section a semiconductor package 10 constructed in accordance with the present invention. The semiconductor package 10 includes a lead frame 12 which is shown in Figure 2. The lead frame 12 includes a plurality of leads 14, each of which defines a generally planar first (bottom) surface 16 and an opposed, generally planar second (top) surface 18. Each of the leads 14 further defines a circularly configured pad portion 20 and at least one elongate connecting bar portion 22 integrally connected to and extending from the pad portion 20. The leads 14 are arranged within the lead frame 12 such that the pad portions 20 are segregated into an outer set of twelve pad portions 20 which are arranged in a generally square pattern and an inner set of four pad portions 20 which are located within the outer set and also arranged in a generally square pattern. The pad portions 20 of the outer set each include a pair of connecting bar portions 22 extending therefrom, with one of the connecting bar portions 22 extending to a dambar 24 of the lead frame 12. The pad portions 20 of the inner set include only a single connecting bar portion 22 extending therefrom which also extends and is integrally connected to the dambar 24. As will be recognized, the dambar 24 is used to support the leads 14 within the lead frame 12 and, as is apparent from

Figure 1, is removed during the process of fabricating the semiconductor package 10. Those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the lead frame 12 may be fabricated to include greater or fewer than twelve leads 14, which also may be arranged in alternative patterns.

[0015] In the semiconductor package 10 of the present invention, the leads 14 are not of uniform thickness. Rather, each of the leads 14 is formed to include a third surface 26 which is perpendicularly offset from the first surface 16. Thus, the third surface 26 extends along a plane which is disposed between, and is generally parallel to, the planes along which the first and second surfaces 16, 18 extend. As best seen in Figures 1 and 3A, the third surfaces 26 of the leads 14 are preferably disposed in opposed relation to those sections or portions of the second surfaces 18 which extend along the connecting bar portions 22. Thus, the connecting bar portions 22 of the leads 14 are of a reduced thickness relative to the pad portions 20 thereof. The third surfaces 26 of the leads 14 may be formed by chemically half-etching the lead frame 12, or through the use of alternative methods. The half-etching will occur on those portions of the first surfaces 16 extending along the connecting bar portions 22, and not those portions extending along the pad portions 20. As further seen in Figure 3A, those non-etched portions of the first surfaces 16 extending along the pad portions 20 each define an output terminal 28 of the semiconductor package 10. The lead frame 12 (and hence the leads 14) is preferably fabricated from copper, iron, or a copper alloy, as is generally known in the art.

[0016] Referring now to Figures 1, 2, 3A and 3B, the second surface 18 of each lead 14 preferably includes a protective layer 30 of a predetermined thickness formed thereon. Additionally, included on the second surface 18

of each lead 14 of the inner set in the approximate center of the pad portion 20 thereof is a bump land 32. A bump land 32 is also formed on each second surface 18 at the innermost end of the connecting bar portion 22 extending from a respective one of the pad portions 20 of the outer set. Thus, as seen in Figure 2, a total of sixteen bump lands 32 are included on the lead frame 12 and arranged in a four-by-four matrix, the corners of which are defined by the bump lands 32 included on the pad portions 20 of the inner set.

[0017] The semiconductor package 10 of the present invention further comprises a semiconductor chip 34 (i.e., a flip chip). The semiconductor chip 34 comprises a body 36 defining a generally planar first (bottom) surface 38 and an opposed, generally planar second (top) surface 40. Formed on the first surface 38 are a plurality of input/output pads 42. Each of the input/output pads 42 is electrically connected to a respective one of the bump lands 32 by a conductive bump 44. Each conductive bump 44 is preferably fabricated by a conductive material such as gold, silver, solder, or their equivalents. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the bump lands 32 included on the pad portions 20 of the inner set are in direct alignment with the input/output terminals 28 defined by the pad portions 20 of the inner set. As a result, there may be difficulty in fusing the conductive bumps 44 to the bump lands 32 included on the pad portions 20 of the inner set attributable to an excessive size of such bump lands 32. For this reason, the protective layer 30 is included on the second surface 18 of each lead 14, with the protective layer 30 being formed to be of a predetermined thickness and to maintain a predetermined region of each bump land 32 in a substantially circular configuration. That is, the protective layer 30 serves to prevent each conductive bump

44 from excessively overflowing along the second surface 18 of each lead 14. The protective layer 30 may be formed on the second surface 18 of each lead 14 at only the vicinity of the corresponding bump land 32, or may be formed to cover the entire second surface 18 of each lead 14 except at the corresponding bump land 32. The protective layer 30 may be fabricated from a conductive or non-conductive material such as aluminum, titanium, or polyimide. However, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the protective layer 30 is not intended to be limited to any particular material.

[0018] As further seen in Figure 1, in the semiconductor package 10 of the present invention, the semiconductor chip 34, the conductive bumps 44, and the leads 14 (with the exception of those portions of the first surfaces 16 defining the input/output terminals 28 and the outermost ends of certain connecting bar portions 22) are covered or encapsulated by an encapsulant 46 in order to protect the same from the external environment. The encapsulant 46 may be any one of an epoxy molding compound, a liquified glop top or its equivalent, with the present invention not being limited to any particular material. In the semiconductor package 10, the third surfaces 26 of the leads 14 are covered by and thus located within the hardened encapsulant 46. As a result, the third surfaces 26 serve to strengthen the adhesion of the encapsulant 46 to the covered or encapsulated components/surfaces of the semiconductor package 10, and prevent movement of the leads 14 within the encapsulant 46 or separation of the leads 14 therefrom. As indicated above, those portions of the first surfaces 16 of the leads 14 defining the input/output terminals 28 are exposed within the bottom surface of the hardened encapsulant 46 in order to provide subsequent mounting or electrical connection of the semiconductor package 10 to an

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external device (not shown). The semiconductor package 10 of the present invention is adapted to withstand severe environments for a prolonged duration of time due to the high resistance thereof to moisture. In addition, the input/output terminals 28 can be directly mounted to an external device such as a motherboard, thus resulting in a reduction in the thickness of the semiconductor package 10.

[0019] This disclosure provides exemplary embodiments of the present invention. The scope of the present invention is not limited by these exemplary embodiments. Numerous variations, whether explicitly provided for by the specification or implied by the specification, such as variations in structure, dimension, type of material or manufacturing process may be implemented by one of skill in the art in view of this disclosure.

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